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Daily News (Bowling Green, KY)**Don't blame farmers for higher grocery prices**

Published: July 28, 2008

The Grocery Manufacturers Associations and the American Petroleum Institute have begun a multi-million campaign targeting the American farmer as the primary reason for increased food prices.

Farmers have never had the ability to set commodity prices. A corn farmer has no ability to charge a dairy farmer more for corn to feed his milk cows than market price, and that dairy farmer has no avenue to charge milk processors more for his milk. Only after milk leaves the farm is its price able to be manipulated.

Production cost of today's \$7 bushel corn is \$5 – that's still \$2 corn for the farmer. Increased food prices can be linked directly to higher cost of crude oil for transportation and packaging which food processors pass to consumers. In 1980, the U.S. Department of **Agriculture** reported farmers received 31 cents of every dollar, now 28 years later, farmers receive 19 cents, and the remaining 81 cents goes to processing, packaging, distribution and advertising.

I wonder how much it cost to sponsor a NASCAR team to advertise products. Of the 170 million acres of field corn and soybeans farmers grow, only 9 percent directly enters our food supply – it's used for livestock feed, renewal fuels or exports.

The bio-fuel industry is misrepresented as inefficient and taking food from hungry people. Bio-fuels will never completely replace crude oil but it has displaced some dependency on imported oil and provided cleaner burning fuels. According to Merrill Lynch, current fuel prices would be 15 percent higher or 60 cents more per gallon if it were not for bio-fuels.

Don't blame the farmer when your grocery bill goes up. We are working to protect the environment where we live and to produce safe, high-quality food for our families and yours.

Linda Dickerson

Woodburn

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